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NEAR EAST/AFRICA DIVISION
OFFICE OF REPORTS AND ESTIMATES
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WORKING PAPER

OCT 19 1949

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NEAR EAST/AFRICA DIVISION

INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

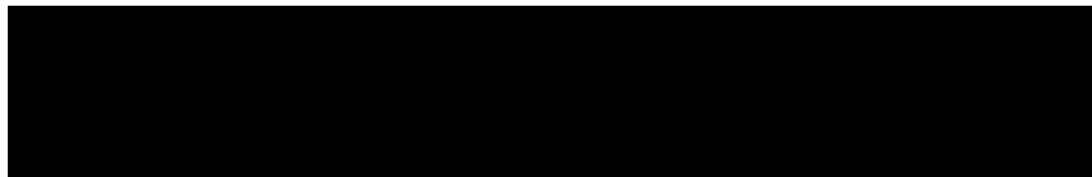
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For Week Ending
19 October 1949

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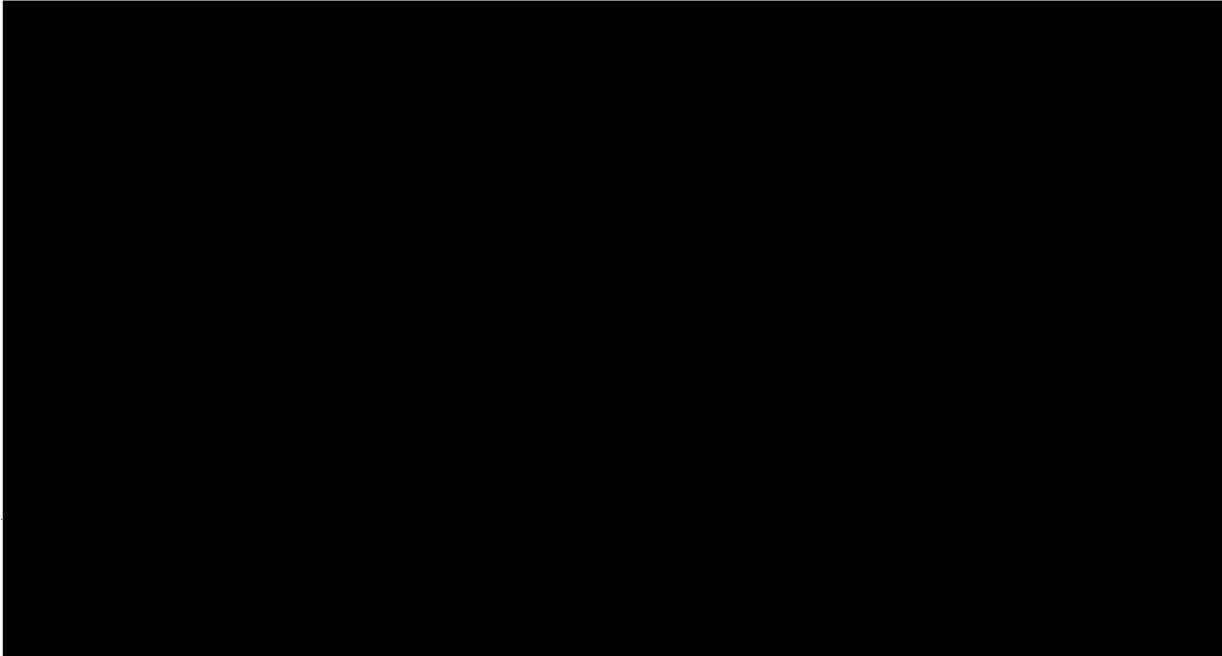
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NEAR EAST/AFRICA INTELLIGENCE SUMMARY

TURKEY

Victory by default: To the surprise of nobody at all, the Turkish Government party won all 14 of last Sunday's by-elections for seats in the National Assembly, thereby obtaining the overwhelmingly comfortable margin of 414 seats out of a total of 465. Any feeling of satisfaction that may be had by government party leaders, however, must be considerably lessened by the realization that the results might well have been altogether different had the principal opposition parties not abstained. Thus, Sunday's by-elections offer no foretaste of what the governing Popular Republican Party may expect from the 1950 general elections, when candidates of other parties are expected to participate under revised electoral procedures--that is, if the government and the opposition can agree on amendments to the present electoral law. Probably the only solid basis for government party satisfaction over Sunday's results was the removal of Governor-Mayor Kirdar from his dual post in Istanbul, where he has been regarded as in part responsible for "excessive" opposition sentiment, to a comparatively harmless deputyship for Manisa. Although the province Kirdar now represents was an ancient Greek source of magnesium, he is not likely to shine with a dazzling bright light.

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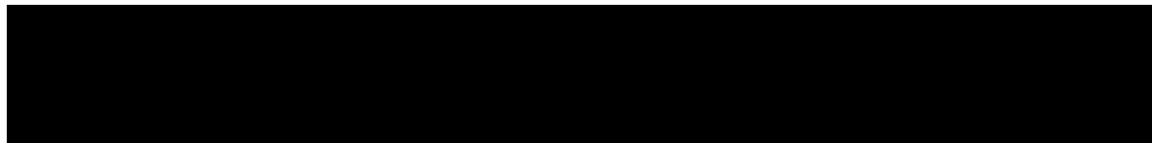


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Hardship widespread in Azerbaijan. Economic depression and deprivation in Azerbaijan have reached such proportions, according to recent reports, as to threaten the outbreak of rebellion among the people. Tribesmen are killing their livestock, seed wheat is being held for winter consumption, and numbers of peasants are migrating to the towns and demanding government relief. The Planning Organization of Iran's economic development program has proposed a list of relief measures, including the distribution of wheat to restore public confidence, assistance in fall plowing, the provision of feed for livestock, the initiation of road repair and construction projects to provide the workers with cash for necessities. If this relief program can be implemented promptly, dangerous political repercussions will be forestalled.

NOTED IN BRIEF

The UN Economic Survey Mission failed to produce any surprises during the closing days of its now completed tour of Israel and the Arab states. The Arab governments continued in their refusal to consider resettlement of the refugees, although all but Saudi Arabia extended a modicum of cooperation to the Mission, and the Israelis exhibited both increasing skepticism about the Mission's value and their old inflexibility on the repatriation and compensation issues. The Mission has accordingly decided to make a two-year work relief program for the refugees its only initial recommendation, although it is still studying the possibility of establishing technical missions under which a unified program of foreign investment in the area could be undertaken.

* * *

The UK has backed down on its plan to send oil tankers to Haifa via the Suez Canal without first gaining Egypt's specific agreement to the traffic. The first Haifa-bound tanker from the Persian Gulf has now been diverted to the UK pending further diplomatic representations on the subject. Meanwhile one unit of the Haifa refinery began operations on 14 October, using what is reportedly a 20-day supply brought in from Venezuela.

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The UN Balkan Conciliation Committee has failed in its initial effort and reportedly will not ask for an extension of its mandate. Nevertheless, the Committee has deprived the Communist peace strategists of some potential propaganda benefits by focussing attention on the basic problem of aggression vs. non-aggression. In doing so, the Committee rejected Soviet suggestions aimed at reviving previous peace proposals which would have reopened the sensitive Albanian frontier question or given the USSR an opening for interfering in Greek affairs. Meanwhile there are growing indications of a movement of guerrilla personnel and families northward from the countries adjacent to Greece, as if the Soviets were preparing to make any UN scrutiny of former guerrilla bases fruitless.

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The 20 million lira bond issue offered by the Turkish Government in August has met a tepid reception, not only among private investors but also on the part of the government-owned banks, and the government has resorted to forced subscriptions on the part of various state-operated institutions in order to take up the slack. This general reluctance to absorb the bond issue, indicating a lack of confidence in the government's financial policies, portends considerable difficulty in financing the rest of Turkey's expected budgetary deficit for 1949.

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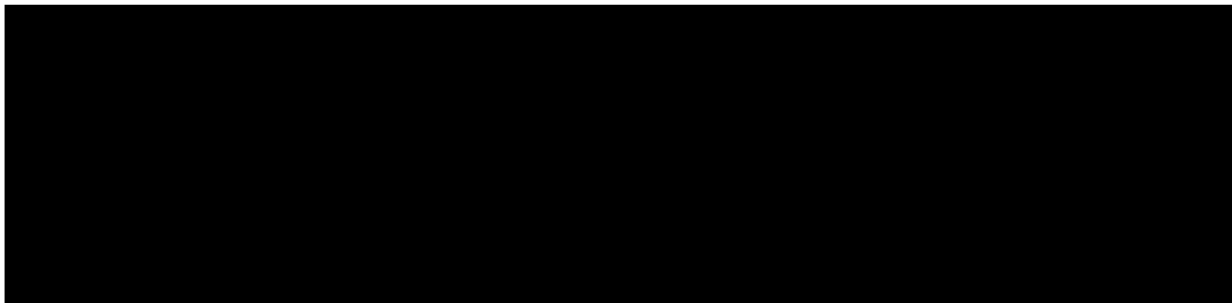
The future appears dim for the TASS correspondent in Turkey who has reportedly explained to other newspapermen that all the USSR really wants from Turkey is a base on the Straits.

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Although some Saadists and Liberals wished to withdraw from the Egyptian Cabinet because of Prime Minister Sirry's alleged partiality to the Wafd Party on the question of parliamentary re-districting, the party chieftains finally decided it would be wiser to remain in the coalition--which has been accordingly strengthened. While the demarcation of electoral districts has been agreed on for only two of Egypt's fourteen provinces so far, it appears likely that concessions will be made by all three parties in order to make possible the holding of parliamentary elections in January.

* * *

Iranian Prime Minister Saed will soon visit London (after receiving medical treatment in Paris) and expects to hold discussions with Cripps, Bevin, and Attlee. Saed will probably raise two outstanding issues: (1) the pending AIOC agreement, which Iran has not accepted and which AIOC apparently does not intend to revise; and (2) the Anglo-Iranian Financial Agreement, which guarantees Iranian sterling balances against devaluation and permits virtually unrestricted convertibility but which is due to expire in November.